

CHILD CARE & EARLY LEARNING

## STATE CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE POLICIES: *SOUTH CAROLINA*

- **Income eligibility limit:** In 2015, a family of three in South Carolina could qualify for child care assistance with an annual income up to \$29,685 (148 percent of poverty, 56 percent of state median income).<sup>1</sup>
- **Waiting list:** South Carolina had no waiting list for child care assistance as of February 2015.
- **Parent copayments:** In 2015, a family of three with an income at 100 percent of poverty (\$20,090 a year) receiving child care assistance in South Carolina paid \$61 per month, or 4 percent of its income, in copayments. A family of three with an income at 150 percent of poverty (\$30,135 a year) receiving child care assistance paid \$87 per month, or 3 percent of its income, in copayments.
- **Reimbursement rates:** In 2015, South Carolina's reimbursement rates for child care providers serving families receiving child care assistance were below the federally recommended level—the 75th percentile of current market rates, which is the level designed to give families access to 75 percent of the providers in their community.
  - South Carolina's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties was \$476,<sup>2</sup> which was \$87 (15 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
  - South Carolina's monthly reimbursement rate for center care for a one-year-old in urban counties was \$528,<sup>3</sup> which was \$102 (16 percent) below the 75th percentile of current market rates for this type of care.
- **Tiered reimbursement rates:** In 2015, South Carolina paid higher reimbursement rates for higher-quality care.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties at the highest quality tier was 60 percent higher than the rate at the lowest quality tier.
  - The reimbursement rate for center care for a four-year-old in urban counties at the highest quality tier was above the 75th percentile of current market rates.
- **Eligibility for parents searching for a job:** In 2015, South Carolina allowed parents to continue receiving child care assistance for up to 30 days while searching for a job.<sup>4</sup> However, the state did not allow parents to qualify for child care assistance while searching for a job.

Source: Karen Schulman and Helen Blank, Building Blocks: State Child Care Assistance Policies 2015 (Washington, DC: National Women's Law Center, 2015). These data reflect policies as of February 2015, unless otherwise indicated.

- 1 In February 2015, families already receiving assistance could continue doing so until their income reached \$34,633. As of October 2015, the income limit to qualify for assistance was expected to increase to \$30,135 (150 percent of poverty) and the exit eligibility limit was expected to increase to \$35,158 (175 percent of poverty) to adjust for 2015 federal poverty level.
- 2 The state has higher rates for higher-quality care; this is the most common rate level (the level representing the greatest number of providers).
- 3 This is the most common rate level.
- 4 Parents receiving child care assistance can continue to receive it while searching for a job for up to 30 days from the date of the employment loss.

